



# Power play puts accelerated I-10 expansion in jeopardy

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West Valley cities are assailing a Phoenix power play that could jeopardize funding to speed up the widening of Interstate 10.

Phoenix City Councilwoman Peggy Neely invoked an obscure rule of the Maricopa Association of Governments that throws out the common practice of counting one vote per city and instead weighs votes based on a city's population.

With the heft of Phoenix's population and the East Valley cities' support, Neely on Wednesday stopped Goodyear, Avondale and Litchfield Park from receiving \$10 million the Legislature had earmarked to cover these cities' share of the costs to speed up construction. The freeway is clogged daily with commuters and truckers as it narrows to two lanes in each direction in the Southwest Valley.

The three cities ended up getting only \$6 million, and now Avondale and Litchfield Park aren't sure they can commit their shares of the extra \$4 million.

"At this point, I don't think it's fair for the Litchfield Park taxpayers to be paying extra to get a federal highway widened," Mayor Tom Schoaf said. "Litchfield Park has no frontage on I-10. It's an interstate highway that benefits the entire country, more than just the region we're in."

Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers called Neely's use of weighted vote a "desperate move" when Phoenix didn't have popular support for its position. In fact, by popular vote of 14-10, the three Southwest Valley cities would've received the full \$10 million.

"It's a blatant abuse of power," Rogers said.

The contentious votes happened Wednesday evening during a MAG regional council meeting in downtown Phoenix.

- [Goodyear, Avondale, Litchfield Park on hook for \\$4M](http://www.azcentral.com/community/swvalley/articles/0823powerplay0823-ON.html)

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